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serving abroad

Stripes™



A news digest from The Stars and Stripes

Thursday, April 30, 1998

Eight pages

Marine guilty in dangling death

By Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Japan — Jurors on Wednesday convicted a Marine of manslaughter in the death of another Marine who fell after being dangled from a third-floor window in Okinawa.

The six-Marine panel deliberated for an hour before announcing its verdict, finding Pfc. Phillip Oxendine guilty of involuntary manslaughter, dereliction of duty, disorderly conduct and making false official statements.

Oxendine was sentenced to 10 years in prison. He was charged in connection with the death of Lance Cpl. Christopher Epley, who died Dec. 21 after he was inadvertently dropped while being dangled from a Camp Schwab barracks window during a drinking party.

Military lawyers told the jury the case's

main issue was whether it's dangerous for drunken Marines to hang their buddies out third-floor barracks windows.

In closing arguments Wednesday, prosecutor Maj. Frank Delzompo said Oxendine was the only one not drunk at the party and should have known that holding Epley by his legs out the window was dangerous.

But defense attorney Capt. Neil Verbrugge said it was an accident, no more foreseeable than an accident during a roller coaster ride or bungee jumping.

"Then where was the safety harness?" Delzompo countered. "This was thrill-seeking. They were seeking a thrill and deliberately disregarding the consequences."

Delzompo said Oxendine hung Epley out of the window even though one of the

first Marines to be dangled had almost fallen.

"He wasn't exercising any care," Delzompo said. "To characterize it as an accident is laughable."

Oxendine, 19, of Lumberton, N.C., sat quietly throughout two days of testimony and said nothing in his defense Tuesday. Verbrugge called just one witness, Pvt. Jackie O. Minnicks II, 22, another Marine who was at the party. Minnicks admitted he was the person who told other Marines to lie by saying Epley fell out of the window while sitting on the windowsill smoking a cigarette.

Still to be tried in Epley's death is Cpl. Geoff Tessier, who faces charges of involuntary manslaughter, dereliction of duty, disorderly conduct, disobeying an order and assault and battery.

Military considers move to admit more Latinos

By Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — In a move that could ease a recruiting crunch — but also could provoke a political backlash — the Pentagon is considering modifying admission rules to bring in more Latinos, a group long underrepresented in the ranks.

Officials are weighing whether to change the military's aptitude test to eliminate "cultural obstacles" that may hold back candidates of Spanish-speaking backgrounds. Also under consideration are proposals to admit more holders of non-traditional secondary-school diplomas, such as general equivalency degrees, and to broaden outreach efforts.

Despite years of Pentagon efforts to boost Latino recruitment, the group now makes up about 6.9 percent of active-duty personnel, compared to its 11 percent share of the U.S. population.

"If we can find a way to broaden the pool of qualified people, that's a plus," said Rudy de Leon, undersecretary of defense for personnel. Current admissions procedures "may be an artificial restriction on capable Hispanics who want to serve."

With the military's post-Cold War shrinkage ending and the brisk economy soaking up other potential recruits, Pentagon officials are keenly interested in the fast-growing supply of talent offered by the Latino community.

Surveys by the military show young Latinos are more willing than young people of other major ethnic groups to pursue military careers.

But they often are held back by culturally related difficulties they meet on the aptitude test and by the military's strong preference for candidates with traditional high school diplomas.

5 nations vote to freeze Serb assets

By Los Angeles Times

ROME — The United States and four European allies agreed Wednesday to freeze Yugoslav government funds in their banks to try to force President Slobodan Milosevic to end a growing assault on Albanian separatists in Kosovo province.

The allies also held out incentives, offering to usher Milosevic's pariah nation into the United Nations, World Bank and other international organizations, if he withdraws military forces from the embattled region and opens "substantive" peace talks with the rebels.

The decision by the Contact Group, the six-nation body that monitors conflicts in the Balkans, was meant to put more pressure on Milosevic to end two months of fighting that has left more than 150 people dead.

But the effect of Wednesday's freeze was far from certain. The diplomats who announced it were unsure how much financial pain it will inflict. Even its symbolic importance was limited by the refusal of Russia, the sixth member of the group, to endorse it.

Still, U.S. diplomats welcomed the outcome of the 13-hour meeting with relief that chronic divisions within the group did not paralyze it this time.

Senate to gulf allies: Pay up

By Scripps Howard News Service
WASHINGTON — A Senate delegation is planning to go to the Persian Gulf to tell U.S. allies to pay up if they want continued military support.

Led by Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, a bipartisan group of key senators will travel to Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and NATO headquarters in Belgium to assess American military missions and to press U.S. allies for greater financial backing.

If a House-Senate conference committee completes work on an emergency spending bill on schedule, the delegation will leave today and return Tuesday. The measure funds, among other things, military operations in Bosnia and Iraq.

"We are going to lay it on the line with our allies and determine whether our military operations are necessary," said Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., who chairs the Senate Budget Committee and serves on the defense appropriations subcommittee.

If they are, he added, the next question to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait will be: "Why don't you pay a significant share of our costs?"

Domenici said the \$1.5 billion needed each year to maintain these unexpected missions is endangering the Defense Department's military readiness, modernization and quality of life for military personnel at home.

VA program for dependents of ill Gulf War vets criticized

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Veterans Affairs Department has been slow and ineffective in carrying out a program to examine the health of the spouses and children of Persian Gulf War veterans, according to a congressional report.

The General Accounting Office, the investigative wing of Congress, said that at the beginning of this year the VA had completed only 872 of 2,802 requests for medical examinations. The examination program began in November 1994 and expires at the end of this year.

"The VA never wanted to carry out the program, dragged its feet for a year and a half and then did such a bad job with implementation that they seriously undermined the program's effectiveness," said Sen. Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia, ranking Democrat on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Rockefeller asked for the GAO study together with the committee chairman, Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa.

Dr. Frances Murphy, head of Gulf War health programs at the VA, agreed that

implementation was incomplete, "but we certainly did the best with the flawed law that we had."

She said that writers of the law wanted both a voluntary registry that was open to all Gulf War veterans and a research study that would reach conclusions about possible links between Gulf War illnesses and the health problems of dependents.

"The goals and the mandates were so conflicted that it was impossible to satisfy," she said.

The VA, she said, is separately carrying out a much larger scientific survey in search of the causes of medical problems.

Thousands of veterans returned from the 1991 war with hard-to-diagnose health problems, and many have said their spouses and children since have come down with similar maladies.

The report, to be made public today, said there was a 17-month delay in starting the program because the VA and senators differed on approaches for implementing it.

Navy jet crashes in Saudi Arabia

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. Navy EA-6B Prowler electronic warfare aircraft crashed in the desert Wednesday about 14 miles north of Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, the military said Wednesday.

The twin-engine jet's four-man crew ejected

safely and was being recovered by rescue helicopters, said a statement issued by Saudi-based Joint Task Force Southwest Asia.

The air base is southeast of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital.

At the time of the Wednesday afternoon ac-

cident, the aircraft was on a mission for Operation Southern Watch, which monitors areas of southern Iraq where Iraqi air activity is banned.

The plane normally is used to support warplanes and ground troops by interfering with the enemy's electronic transmissions.

2 generals added to Joint Chiefs of Staff

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has chosen two major generals as advisers on the National Guard and the Reserve.

The Pentagon announced Tuesday that Maj. Gen. Michael W. Davidson, of the Army National Guard, and Air Force Reserve Maj. Gen. Robert A. McIntosh will serve in the full-time positions for two-year terms.

Born in Memphis, Tenn., Davidson has served more than 27 years in the active Army and then the Army National Guard. He currently works on mobilization matters for the Joint Staff. He has served as

adjutant general of Kentucky, deputy commanding general of the Army National Guard and with the Army Special Operations Command.

McIntosh, who joined the Air Force in 1966, is chief of the Air Force Reserve in Washington and heads the Air Force Reserve Command at Robins Air Force Base., Ga. A command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours, McIntosh has commanded an Air Force Reserve wing, two Reserve numbered air forces and served as vice commander of the Air Force Reserve.

Congress ordered the two positions in this year's Defense authorization act.

Stripes

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NATO expansion foes drag out Senate debate

By Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — Senate opponents of NATO expansion dragged out debate on the plan Wednesday, but the delays showed no signs of ultimately derailing the addition of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the alliance.

Reinforcing its reputation as the world's most talkative club, the Senate droned through a third day of discussion, considering amendments — from accounting for personnel missing in action from the Vietnam War to U.S. military policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Although amendments supported by expansion backers were approved and amendments submitted by opponents failed, there was enough crossover to make the votes a less-than-accurate precursor of the final decision.

Despite the drawn-out debate, there was no erosion in support for the expansion. Proponents continued to predict approval by a margin

comfortably greater than the two-thirds vote required.

The expansion plan is backed by President Clinton, Republican and Democratic Senate leaders, and the Senate's foreign policy heavyweights: Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jesse Helms, R-N.C.; former Foreign Relations Chairman Richard Lugar, R-Ind.; and the committee's senior Democrat, Joseph Biden of Delaware.

"Most senators, I believe, are reaching the correct conclusion that bringing Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into the NATO alliance is the right thing to do," Helms said.

Proponents of the expansion argue that the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe deserve consideration as NATO members. But opponents maintain that it would be a mistake for the United States to extend its military protection to an ever-widening circle of new members.

Group wants Special Forces open to women

By Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Pentagon advisory group is calling for the military's elite forces to open their aviation ranks to women.

In addition, the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services wants the Pentagon to devise a standard policy on fraternization and three military services to maintain basic training that integrates men and women.

The committee plans to recommend that aviation jobs in Special Forces be opened to women as well as positions on Multiple Launch Rocket Systems and in submarines. Committee officials said they want military leaders to justify why those positions remain closed to women.

The problem is that the current restrictions seem to be nothing more than a replacement for the Risk Rule that was rescinded in 1994, committee members said. The rule prevented women from serving in combat units that could engage in direct combat.

After it was rescinded, Pentagon officials spelled out the restrictions for women with the Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule.

Under the rule, women are eligible for all positions except those below the brigade level whose primary mission is direct combat on the ground. This generally means they cannot be a part of infantry, armor or artillery units.

Only submarines and certain small combat ships in the Navy remain closed to women.

However, committee members said the rule falls short. In turn, the committee will urge the Pentagon to review the policy to determine what jobs and units could be opened to women.

Panel OKs intelligence authorization bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Intelligence Committee wants to modernize eavesdropping programs, revitalize clandestine human intelligence and boost covert action capabilities.

"We see the need for concerted focus on signals intelligence, human intelligence, all-source analysis and our covert action capabilities," said Rep.

Porter Goss, R-Fla., the committee chairman.

The committee in a closed meeting Wednesday approved and sent to the full House the annual intelligence authorization bill, a classified measure that sets policy and spending priorities for the CIA and a host of other U.S. agencies that gather intelligence.

The committee was par-

ticularly concerned about the explosion in telecommunications and computer technology and the new tools that allow adversaries to foil U.S. interception of communications and signals. This highly secretive area of intelligence involves efforts to tap into high-level government communications, encoded documents and technical emissions.

U.N. panel likely to approve curb on illicit firearms

By New York Times

VIENNA, Austria — A proposal by a U.N. commission intended to curb the illicit trade in firearms has moved toward almost certain adoption, in the wake of a sharp attack by the National Rifle Association.

The gun lobby, which has had official status in the proceedings before the U.N. Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, lashed out at the agency for the secrecy of its proceedings and said

the commission had issued an "uncredible" report that "affronts" law-abiding Americans.

The chief lobbyist of the group, Tanya Metaksa, noted in a speech in Vienna on Monday that the NRA had been criticized for its assertiveness in the debate over the firearms trade but pledged to continue.

That assertiveness, which has been successful in part, has included an attack on Japan that some delegates have found offensive and racist. The delegates were re-

ferring to a letter from Metaksa in November that asked association members to protest the United Nations involvement in firearms issues. She called the involvement "this Japanese global gun scheme" and accused Japan of "meddling in the internal affairs of the United States."

"We can't give the Japanese and other U.N. gun banners even half a chance to ban our guns and attack our U.S. Constitution!" she wrote.

No immunity for Lewinsky

By Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — In a significant victory for independent counsel Kenneth Starr, a federal judge has ruled that former White House intern Monica Lewinsky does not have immunity from prosecution in the investigation of whether President Clinton lied about or tried to cover up the nature of his relationship with her, sources said Wednesday.

A sealed ruling by U.S. District Judge Norma Holloway Johnson is likely to mark a turning point in the three-month-old investigation, leading to grand jury testimony from Lewinsky and other witnesses on matters central to the case.

Starr's prosecutors want Lewinsky to testify under oath about the precise nature of her relationship with the president, whether Clinton asked her or others to lie about it under oath and how Clinton adviser Vernon Jordan Jr. happened to line up a job offer for her — as well as other matters.

Sources close to either side of the investigation who asked not to be identified said it is possible that Johnson had

stopped short of a formal ruling but had communicated her intention to both sides before Wednesday.

In declining to confirm that the judge had issued a ruling, Charles Bakaly III, counselor to Starr, said, "We cannot comment about sealed proceedings before the court."

Lewinsky's testimony also would open the door to a grand jury appearance by her former friend, Linda Tripp, who taped her phone conversations with the former intern, told Starr's office that Lewinsky had told her of a sexual relationship with Clinton and in January wore a surveillance wire to a meeting at which Lewinsky later was approached by Starr's prosecutors.

Lewinsky's testimony is not yet guaranteed, however. Her attorney, William Ginsburg, told reporters, "We have received neither a valid order nor an opinion and we have not been notified that any such documents are pending."

Ginsburg previously has said that if Judge Johnson ruled in Starr's favor, he promptly would appeal.

Gingrich goes on the offensive

WASHINGTON (AP) — After months of muted remarks, House Speaker Newt Gingrich is on the offensive about a "fairly large and growing scandal" swirling around President Clinton and linking the fate of one piece of legislation to White House cooperation with GOP investigators.

"If the Clinton administration does not turn over documents and information, if they don't make witnesses available, they're not in a very

strong position to demand that we give them any money for anything," Gingrich said Wednesday in comments about proposed \$18 billion support for the IMF.

It marked the third consecutive day that the leader of House Republicans had spoken out forcefully about allegations of fund-raising abuses by Clinton's 1996 campaign.

And Democrats eagerly joined the fray against a man who admitted violating House rules in a cele-

brated ethics case more than a year ago.

The Democratic National Committee issued a statement saying Gingrich — a handy target for Democratic campaign ads in 1996 — had "continued his re-descent into the gutter of American politics" with his new criticism of Clinton. And Presidential spokesman Mike McCurry suggested the White House might not be able to do business with Gingrich until "he comes back to his senses."

282,000 pounds of ground beef recalled

WASHINGTON (AP) — Much of the 282,000 pounds of ground beef recalled by the nation's biggest processor for fear of E. coli bacteria contamination probably has already been eaten, federal officials say.

No illnesses have been reported.

A single 20-pound package of tainted meat was discovered during routine tests by the Agriculture Department at the IBP Inc. plant in Joslin, Ill., April 14. The recall represents the day's entire production

at the plant. The coarsely ground meat was intended for institutional use; it typically is processed further by grocers and restaurants, so there are no product codes for consumers to check.

"The product was distributed nationwide," said Tom Billy, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

In addition, one military shipment of 215 cases destined for Europe is being retrieved.

Study: Abortion pill 92% effective in tests

From wire reports

BOSTON — The abortion pill RU-486 successfully ended pregnancies in 92 percent of women tested in the United States, according to research published today.

The drug has been widely tested and used in Europe, but the Food and Drug administration requested additional studies of its safety and effectiveness in the United States.

The results are published in today's issue of the New England Journal of Medicine. The drug's U.S. developer says it hopes to have the pill on the market sometime next year.

In the study, the first formal tests in the United States, the drug was slightly less effective than in earlier European experiments, where it triggered abortions in 96 percent to 99 percent of women.

Black heads S. Africa military

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — In a historic step toward transforming the military here, the Soviet-trained former commander of the main anti-apartheid guerrilla force Wednesday was appointed the first black chief of the South African National Defense Force.

Lt. Gen. Siphwe Nyanda, 46, who led Umkhonto weSizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress, at the end of the bitter struggle against the apartheid system, inherits a 93,000-strong force in the throes of change, facing defense spending cuts, and rattled by an intelligence fiasco that led to his predecessor's sudden resignation.

Plan to protect rain forest

WASHINGTON — Embarking on a project intended to slow the steady destruction of economically and environmentally valuable tropical rain forests, the World Bank and Brazil unveiled a program Wednesday to nearly triple the amount of Amazon and Atlantic forest acreage under protection.

But the program, which would put 10 percent of the Amazon under protection within two years, drew immediate expressions of skepticism from environmentalists, who questioned whether Brazil would find the political will — and whether the World Bank would make good on a seemingly open-ended financial commitment — to enforce the plan.

Tropical rain forests are among the most biologically diverse wilderness areas on earth.

Astronauts perform surgery on selves

From wire reports

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — After months of training, Columbia's astronauts successfully completed the most difficult medical procedure ever attempted on someone in space — guiding a tiny needle into a leg nerve.

The nerve, located behind the knee, is impossible to see and nearly impossible to feel.

Yet the shuttle's medical men managed to find the nerve in one another within the allotted 40 minutes, said Dr. David Robertson, a Vanderbilt University blood pressure specialist who trained the crew. In one instance, they found it within 10 minutes.

"We think that's just great," Robertson said Wednesday.

Robertson's experiment is aimed at understanding and, hopefully, easing the blood pressure problem and accompanying dizziness suffered by many astronauts when they return to Earth. An estimated 500,000 Americans experience the same thing every day when they stand up.

Amy Fisher seeks new trial

NEW YORK — Amy Fisher, the "Long Island Lolita" who pleaded guilty to shooting her lover's wife, requested a new trial on Wednesday.

Her lawyer, Bruce A. Barket, requested that her five-year-old plea on an assault charge be tossed out and she be freed from prison on bail.

He said prosecutor Denis Dillon had offered the plea bargain with the promise that after Fisher served five years in prison, the prosecutor would recommend parole.

Fisher pleaded guilty to an assault charge in the 1992 near-fatal shooting of Mary Jo Buttafuoco, the wife of her lover Joey Buttafuoco. Buttafuoco served six months in jail for statutory rape of Fisher, who was 16 at the time of their affair.

Needle exchanges bill

WASHINGTON — Seeking to take the initiative against illegal drugs, House Republicans pushed through legislation that would permanently ban federal funding for needle exchanges as they prepared a package of tough anti-drug measures.

"This is a very important turning point in the United States," House Speaker Newt Gingrich said Wednesday, urging Democrats to join in fixing what he considers the Clinton administration's faulty anti-drug policy.

China prodded — again — on human rights, freedoms

BEIJING (AP) — President Clinton urged Chinese President Jiang Zemin today to move forward on human rights and religious freedom while curbing exports of weapons technology. Clinton also gave assurances his long-term vision was one of "concrete cooperation" between their two countries.

Clinton's views were contained in a message that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright delivered to Jiang as they made preparations for Clinton's

state visit in June. The Chinese leader, in a good mood, took Albright on a tour of his 600-year old compound and a lakeside pavilion where some of the summit will be conducted.

The thrust of Clinton's letter was a desire to build on the momentum toward better ties that were established when Jiang visited Washington last October. He told the Chinese leader he wanted to see "new steps" taken to expand contacts between the two governments and their

people.

Along Clinton's suggestions were exchanges of scientists and health and education specialists.

But he did not gloss over "specific areas of concern," according to James P. Rubin, the State Department spokesman. These included a need to conclude arrangements for China to join the World Trade Organization, the international rule-setting body for trade, and coping with energy and environmental problems, the U.S. official said.

Carnival atmosphere in Israel

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israelis wrapped themselves in flags, danced in the streets and gathered for family barbecues in parks today as the country celebrated 50 tumultuous years of statehood.

The perilous birth of the Jewish state half a century ago was hailed as miraculous, despite Israel's pressing internal problems and the breakdown of the Mideast peace process.

"It is an incredible experience," said 18-year-old Elana Santo of New York City after she prayed today at the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest shrine.

"The unity I feel here is nothing like the Fourth of July in America. It's a genuine unity."

The anniversary falls on May 14 on the Western calendar, but under the Hebrew calendar it began Wednesday night. A carnival atmosphere prevailed in streets, where vendors selling sparklers, flags and anniversary T-shirts.

Grinning young soldiers carried their M-16 rifles — and cans of shaving cream for spraying passers-by. Partiers wrapped themselves in flags emblazoned with the Star of David and danced

to religious rock music and hip-hop. This morning, families carrying barbecue pits, tents and bags of food made their way to parks throughout the country for a day of togetherness.

Celebrations were to be capped with a glitzy song-and-dance extravaganza tonight at Jerusalem's Givat Ram stadium, with U.S. Vice President Al Gore as guest of honor.

Gore landed in Israel this morning and held talks with Israel's trade minister, former Russian dissident Natan Sharansky.

More lawsuits for tobacco industry

WASHINGTON (AP) — The tobacco industry conspired to cover up the health risks of smoking and the development of less harmful cigarettes, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield medical plans are charging in new lawsuits.

The Coalition for Tobacco Responsibility, representing Blue Cross and Blue Shield health plans in more than 35 states, filed federal lawsuits Wednesday against the tobacco industry in Seattle, New York and Chicago to recover the costs of treating sick smokers.

"Tobacco companies must be held ac-

countable for their lies and for the damage they have inflicted on the health of this nation," said Dr. Michael McGarvey, chief medical officer of Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey and spokesman for the coalition.

Despite that latest dose of bad publicity, the tobacco industry received good news, too. House Republicans on Tuesday rejected what many believed was the chamber's best chance at a tobacco bill that would have sharply raised cigarette prices and provided companies none of the lawsuit protection they demand.

Affair sparked slayings, attorney in O.J. case says

From wire reports

LOS ANGELES — O.J. Simpson killed his ex-wife because she had resumed an affair with football player Marcus Allen, attorney Daniel Petrocelli said Tuesday in a TV interview.

Allen has denied he had an affair with Nicole Brown Simpson.

Petrocelli, who convinced civil jurors that Simpson was responsible for the deaths of Simpson and her friend Ron Goldman, told *Dateline NBC* that Simpson could not accept that his ex-wife had rejected him for the Kansas City Chiefs star.

"Every time I spoke to witnesses close to Simpson, it always came back to Marcus Allen," said Petrocelli, who represented the Goldman family in the civil suit. "I believe that that was what made Simpson snap."

An unidentified spokesman for Allen told *Dateline NBC* that Allen never had an affair with Simpson and said Petrocelli was "playing fast and loose with the truth."

Simpson was acquitted of killing Nicole Brown Simpson and Goldman in 1994, but jurors in a civil wrongful death trial last year held him liable and ordered him to pay \$33.5 million in damages.

New educational channel

NEW YORK — Two of the biggest names in children's television are teaming up to create a new educational channel for kids.

Nickelodeon and Children's Television Workshop, the makers of *Sesame Street*, plan to launch Noggin in January. It's billed as the first television network devoted strictly to educational programming.

Commercial-free at the start, Noggin will air reruns of shows created by the two organizations, like *Blues Clues*, *Nick News*, *Sesame Street* and *Electric Company*.

New programming won't be created until Noggin has been on the air for at least a year, executives said Tuesday.

Part of brain never sleeps

You may be asleep, but there's a place in the side of your brain that stays awake. It's listening for a baby's cry, a rattle in the lock or some other sign of trouble.

Research by a Johns Hopkins University undergraduate now suggests that there is another spot in the front of the brain that also stays up, perhaps deciding which noises are serious enough to demand you be awakened.

Hopkins junior Serena J. Gondek, 21, presented the findings Tuesday in a rare undergraduate talk before neurologists and neuroscience professionals at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology, in Minneapolis.

"The reason we think it is also taking place in the frontal area is that that has been found to be the area where the executive and attention functions are found that perform motor planning, attention and possibly even arousal (from sleep)," Gondek said.

**Faces
'n'
places**

Oh, no! Not more commercials !!

NEW YORK (AP) — If those commercial breaks are seeming longer and longer, it's not just your imagination.

The amount of commercial time aired by prime-time broadcasters has increased by nearly two minutes since the start of the decade. Prime-time TV had more ads than ever last year, according to a study released Tuesday.

The top four broadcast networks ran an average of 11 minutes, 12 seconds of commercials during each hour of prime-time last November. That's a 14 percent increase from the 9:38 of commercial time in November 1991, according to a report commissioned by two advertising trade groups.

Add in network promotions and public service announcements, and there is just over 15 minutes of what ad agencies call "clutter" during a typical prime-time hour.

"My personal feeling is that they've pretty much maxed-out," said Steve Grubbs of the BBDO advertising agency, which conducted the study.

Networks have been forced to increase the number of commercials to keep making money at a time when the "product" they sell to advertisers — the TV audience — is dwindling in size, Grubbs said.

In addition to the extra commercial time, there's been a tendency during the 1990s toward running shorter, 15-second ads.

I tawt I taw new stamps

By Cox News service

SYLVESTER, Ga. - Sylvester, best known for its annual Possum Poke Peanut Festival, now has another claim to fame - its residents were first to lick the new "Tweety & Sylvester" postage stamp Tuesday.

The small southwest Georgia town's post office was selected, over cities of the same name in Texas and West Virginia, to do a special cancellation of the stamp. Hundreds of locals and a few out-of-towners stampeded the post office for the celebration.

The stamp was unveiled Monday in Burbank, Ca., but didn't go on sale until Tuesday in Sylvester.

In The Stars and Stripes

10 YEARS AGO

April 30, 1988 — Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci said President Reagan has decided to provide protection to any neutral, nonbelligerent ship under attack in the Persian Gulf that asks for help.

20 YEARS AGO

April 30, 1978 — General Motors Corp., in an action it called "consistent" with President Carter's anti-inflation program, raised the price of all GM cars by \$63.

30 YEARS AGO

April 30, 1968 — Columbia University remained closed for a fifth day to permit a continuation of discussions about the student sit-in at five university buildings.

40 YEARS AGO

April 30, 1958 — President Eisenhower's plan for arctic inspection ended in a United Nations deadlock with the Russians calling it an outright "threat to peace."

50 YEARS AGO

April 30, 1948 — Gen. Lucius D. Clay, U.S. military governor, said he would order the Air Force's huge B-29s to fly over Berlin any time he thought it advisable.

N.Y. mayor may bypass stadium referendum

By New York Times

NEW YORK — Mayor Rudolph Giuliani plans to summon little-known powers granted to him by the City Charter to block any attempts to hold a referendum on the future home of the New York Yankees, an aide to the mayor said Wednesday night.

The mayor's effort, which the aide said he would announce on Thursday afternoon, is intended to thwart plans by Peter Vallone, the City Council speaker, to insert a question on the November ballot about whether the City Charter should be amended to prevent city funds from being used to build a stadium for the Yankees outside the Bronx.

While the mayor has said he wants the Yankees to stay in the Bronx, his administration has been trying to build support for a stadium on the West Side of Manhattan.

The mayoral aide, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Giuliani's charter plan would work this way: He would convene a charter-revision commission and instruct it to develop a charter-related question to place on the November ballot. According to the City Charter, the aide said, "the mayor's question takes precedence over any other."

Last week, Vallone said he would do "whatever is necessary and responsible to keep the Yankees in the Bronx." He also said that the taxpayers had to decide whether city money should go toward building a new stadium.

"I believe that we need to hear from the taxpayers before we sink a billion dollars into a new stadium in Manhattan," Vallone had said.

Vallone had proposed his charter plan to answer a public outcry over the possibility of moving the Yankees out of the Bronx. The team's principal owner, George Steinbrenner III, has expressed strong dissatisfaction with the Yankees' current home, especially after a fallen slab of steel forced the stadium to close for nearly two weeks.

White Sox belt 6 homers

By Associated Press

The Chicago White Sox hit the ball right on the nose ... and in one instance, right into the nose.

Wil Cordero and Albert Belle homered twice apiece and Chicago hit six home runs in a 16-7 rout of the slumping Baltimore Orioles on Wednesday night.

Frank Thomas and Robin Ventura also homered for the White Sox, who overcame a 4-0 deficit to win for just the fourth time in 12 games.

Thomas added to the assault on Baltimore pitching by hitting a line drive in the seventh inning that deflected off reliever Norm Charlton's glove and broke the pitcher's nose.

"Thank goodness it wasn't a full swing," Charlton said.

Cordero hit a solo homer in the third and broke a 4-all tie in the fifth with his second career slam.

Chicago had consecutive homers twice.

Elsewhere in the AL, it was New York 8, Seattle 5; Texas 4, Detroit 1; Oakland 11, Cleveland 4; Boston 8, Anaheim 4; Kansas City 7, Toronto 2; and Minnesota 2, Tampa Bay 0.

Yankees 8, Mariners 5



Astros roll to 6th straight win

HOUSTON (AP) — Jose Lima went to spring training not knowing if he'd make the Houston Astros. Now they're wondering where they'd be without him.

The right-hander won his fourth game and Derek Bell went 3-for-4 with two RBIs Wednesday night in the Astros' 6-1 victory over the New York Mets. It was Houston's sixth straight win.

"He did tonight what he's done every start," manager Larry Dierker said of Lima. "He gives us seven very good innings and gives us a chance to win. I don't know where we'd be if he hadn't come through for us, but he's pitching like he plans to stay in the rotation for a long time."

Lima (4-1) gave up eight hits in 6 2-3 innings.

He was replaced by C.J. Nitkowski after giving up consecutive two-out singles in the seventh.

In the NL's only other games Wednesday, St. Louis beat Montreal 13-7 and Cincinnati beat Philadelphia 1-0.

Cardinals 13, Expos 7



At New York, David Cone (3-1) struck out a season-high 11 in six innings, and the Yankees homered three times.

Ken Griffey Jr. hit his ninth homer for Seattle, which leads the majors with 42.

Rangers 4, Tigers 1

At Detroit, Texas set a team record with their 18th win in April and a major-league record for runs in the month.

The Rangers (18-7) won their fifth straight and topped the team win mark of 17, set in 1989.

Athletics 11, Indians 4

Rookie Ben Grieve went 5-for-5 with two RBIs, Kenny Rogers won his third straight decision and Oakland won its fourth straight with a victory at Cleveland.

Red Sox 8, Angels 4

At Boston, John Valentin hit two homers and Jim Leyritz hit one as the Red Sox snapped the Angels' six-game winning streak.

Royals 7, Blue Jays 2

Hal Morris hit his first AL home run and Dean Palmer followed with his ninth as Kansas City snapped a three-game losing streak with a win at Toronto.

Twins 2, Devil Rays 0

At Minneapolis, Bob Tewksbury (3-3) and Rick Aguilera combined on a five-hitter as Tampa Bay lost for the eighth time in nine games.

Mark McGwire had two RBIs to regain the NL lead and Delino DeShields had three hits and two RBIs at Busch Stadium as St. Louis overcame a 5-0, fourth-inning deficit.

McGwire walked on five pitches with the bases loaded in the fourth and had a rare opposite-field RBI double to put the Cardinals ahead 6-5 in a five-run sixth.

His 34 RBIs are one more than Colorado's Vinny Castilla.

DeShields raised his average to .395 and tied the score in the sixth with a two-run triple off Steve Kline (1-1). Mike Busby (3-0) pitched two hitless innings for St. Louis.

Reds 1, Phillies 0

Pete Harnisch (2-0) pitched a two-hitter for his first shutout in two seasons and Eddie Taubensee singled home a first-inning run at Cincinnati.

Harnisch struck out eight and walked only one, a day after the Reds walked 11 walks in an 11-8 loss.

Mike Grace (1-3) allowed five hits in seven innings.

Bulls, Spurs advance

By Associated Press

The Chicago Bulls and San Antonio Spurs had no problems advancing to the second round of the NBA playoffs. However, the Western Conference favorite is in big trouble.

Hakeem Olajuwon, Clyde Drexler and Charles Barkley led Houston over the Utah Jazz 89-85 Wednesday night, giving the Rockets a 2-1 lead in the best-of-5 series.

The Rockets need one more victory to become only the second No. 8 seed to beat a No. 1 seed. No. 8 Denver upset top-seeded Seattle in 1994.

"Houston is a great team," Utah coach Jerry Sloan said. "They have three guys who will be in the Hall of Fame. You give them the rest they've had and they can



beat anyone."

No more opening-round games will be necessary for the Bulls or Spurs, who both closed out their series Wednesday night.

Michael Jordan scored 38 points as Chicago beat New Jersey 116-101 to complete a 3-0 sweep, and Avery Johnson scored a career-high 30 points as San Antonio defeated Phoenix 99-80 to win that series 3-1.

Bulls 116, Nets 101

Jordan made 16 of 22 shots from the field and got strong support from Scott Burrell, who scored 23 points on 9-of-11 shooting for the visiting Bulls.

Spurs 99, Suns 80

Johnson continued his sizzling playoff run, combining with Chuck Person to spark the decisive second-half spurt by the Spurs.

Blues sweep Kings with win

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — St. Louis goalie Grant Fuhr heard the referee's whistle loud and clear. His teammates weren't so sure. The Los Angeles Kings thought they had just tied the play-off game.

Glen Murray's redirected shot slowed down when it hit Fuhr's pads in the third period, but it kept moving and slid 2 inches over the goal line.

With 9:50 remaining, the red light behind the goal flashed and the sellout crowd of 16,005 at the Forum went wild, cheering for what they believed had become a 2-2 game.

But referee Stephen Walkom, too far away to see the puck go in, whistled the play dead, and the goal didn't count. The Blues hung on for a 2-1 victory Wednesday



day to sweep the first-round series 4-0.

In the other series, Buffalo took a 3-1 lead heading back to Philadelphia with a 4-1 victory, while Pittsburgh evened its series with Montreal at 2-2 with a 6-3 win.

Sabres 4, Flyers 1

The Dominator continued to, well, dominate.

Dominik Hasek, who led the Czech Republic to the Olympic gold medal in February, made 44 saves. Hasek put together his best performance of the postseason and the Sabres scored three power-play goals.

Penguins 6, Canadiens 3

At Montreal, Jaromir Jagr had two goals and one assist and the Penguins scored four special-teams goals in the first period.

No luck of the draw for Kentucky Derby

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — D. Wayne Lukas still likes the idea, even though he took the biggest hit in the great Kentucky Derby draw debacle.

While calling out numbers and matching them up with the 15 horses for the draft, ESPN announcer Chris Lincoln inadvertently called No. 15 twice — for Artax and Rock and Roll — and forced Churchill Downs racing officials to declare a redraw.

"I learned a valuable lesson — don't handle the pills," Lincoln said.

The redraw was the only recourse under Kentucky racing rules.

Lukas, who trains Florida Derby winner Cape Town, went from the No. 1 pick to the No. 10 choice.

But Cape Town still ended up with the No. 11 post, one Lukas said he could live with.

"If I had first pick, I would have gone for No. 7 or No. 8," said Lukas, who watched from a front row seat at the crowded Derby Museum as trainer Bill Mott got the top pick and went for the No. 7 post for Horse of the Year Favorite Trick.

"I was happy with the No. 11 post. We can keep an eye on the favorites."

Irish swimmer Smith fights to clear name

From wire reports

DUBLIN, Ireland — It was all so familiar for Michelle Smith.

A triple Olympic champion faced by scores of media asking questions, taking photos, rolling cameras. But there were no medals around her neck this time.

Just more drugs allegations.

Her career tainted by doping innuendo after her spectacular performances in Atlanta, Smith now faces charges from swimming's governing body, FINA, that she may have tampered with a random sample and that it may have contained signs of a banned substance.

"I am innocent of these charges, I am appalled at the manner in which they have been leaked into the public domain, and I intend fully defending them, if necessary, all to the way to the International Sports Court in Switzerland," a defiant Smith told a packed news conference in downtown Dublin on Wednesday.

"I have no intention of taking this lying down and I have no intention of being bullied by any organization, national or international."

In a new twist, a senior IOC official said today that the sample submitted by Smith contained a fatal concentration of alcohol.

Arizona signs QB Brown

Dave Brown, who once competed with Kent Graham as the Giants' starting quarterback, moved into Graham's place as Arizona's backup quarterback by signing a two-year contract Wednesday with the Cardinals. Graham has returned to the Giants as a free agent.

Brown's contract calls for a \$200,000 signing bonus and \$990,000 in salary over the next two seasons. He will provide a veteran backup to the second-year starter Jake Plummer.

Brown, 28, lost his starting job with the Giants last season to Danny Kanell.

Graf's father goes free

STUTTGART, Germany — Peter Graf, father of former top-ranked tennis player Steffi Graf, was released from prison Wednesday after serving more than half of a nearly four-year sentence for tax evasion.

The Baden-Wuerttemberg state court overturned a district court decision earlier this month that had denied Graf an early release. Graf, 59, was sentenced in January 1997 to three years, nine months for evading taxes on \$6.55 million of his daughter's tennis earnings.